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FOREWORD

●114 THE study of religions can be approached in many different ways and can present a number of different kinds of problems. For social anthropologists, or for some of them, one major problem is that of the social function of religion—how does religion contribute to the existence of society as an ordered and continuing system of relationships amongst human beings? It is recognized that religion is a binding force amongst individuals, and it would seem that the etymology of the word indicates this. The scientific problem is how religion does this; how, in other words, it functions. The problem is one of very considerable complexity, and it cannot be said that at present we know very much about this subject. The only method by which we can hope ultimately to arrive at an understanding of it is by a number of analytic descriptive studies of religions of diverse types, so that by systematic comparison it may be possible to arrive at some general theory. This work of Dr. Srinivas is an important contribution to that investigation. It gives us a description and analysis of the religious practices of a people of India, the Coorgs of Coorg.

For the social anthropologist the religion of a people presents itself in the first instance not as a body of doctrine, but as what we may call 'religious' behaviour as a part of social life. Social anthropology is behaviouristic in the sense that we seek to observe how people act as a necessary preliminary to trying to understand how they think and feel. This book, by a trained anthropologist, who is himself an Indian, and who has therefore an understanding of Indian ways of thought which it is difficult for a European to attain even over many years, gives us a scientifically valuable and objective account of the religious behaviour of a particular Indian community.

771 In an investigation into the social function of religion in a parti-
182 cular society the first thing required is to examine the relation of the religion to the social structure. In this respect the religion of the Coorgs is of very special interest and value. For we may say that there are three different structural systems in which the individual Coorg is involved, and each of these has its own system of religious behaviour and obligations.

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In the first place the Coorg individual is a member of a domestic group, the *okka* or patrilineal joint-family. His closest social ties are with this group and its members, and the well-being of this group is something that is for him of supreme importance. Each such group has its own religious cult. There are daily religious observances of the members of the joint family. There are recurrent occasions on which ritual performances are called for. Any event which affects the solidarity or well-being of the group is an occasion of ritual, such as in births, deaths, and marriages. Piety, for a Coorg, is in the first place the observance of the requirements of this domestic cult.

Dr. Srinivas has described for us the various features of this domestic cult, but he has done more than that. He has helped us to see the social function of these rituals as expressing and maintaining the solidarity and continuity of the structural system. Further, he has sought, with some considerable measure of success, to reveal the meaning of the ritual idiom of the Coorg domestic cult. In any system of ritual each ritual action has its meaning, and the totality of such meanings constitutes the idiom of that system. Just as different societies have different languages so also they have their systems of ritual idiom, and it is the task of the social anthropologist to investigate a system of ritual idiom in the same way that he studies a language. To understand the way a people talk it is necessary to know the idiom of their language; to understand a religion it is necessary to have some understanding of the ritual idiom in which they express their religious sentiments. We do not understand the Coorg domestic cult unless we understand the religious meaning to the Coorgs of the lamp hanging in the hall of the house; and other features of their rites and ceremonies.

Besides being a member of a joint family (*okka*) the Coorg individual is a member of a village community which includes not only persons of his own caste but also members of other castes. The village community has its own religious cult, with its god or gods and its temple or shrine or temples. The village-deities, when properly propitiated, protect the village and its inhabitants from smallpox and plague and other supernatural evils, and afford blessings such as good health and abundant crops. Thus the cult of the village-deities is a collective action of the community. Just as the domestic cult has for its ostensible aim the preservation of the well-being of the particular group, so the village cult has for its

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564 'caste'. There are some thousands of such groups in India as a whole. A caste is in its essence a religious group, membership of which entails certain ritual observances. The rules of caste behaviour are rules of religion.

The caste system of India presents a kind of social structure that is of special interest to comparative sociology. There are two major features. The first of these is what we may call 'separatism'. There are important rules which limit the social contact of members of different castes. The rule of endogamy prohibits marriage between members of different castes or sub-castes. There are caste rules as to the persons with whom one may partake of a meal, or from whose hands one may accept food or drink. The second important feature is that there is religious or ritual inequality of castes. Any man born as a Brahmin is holy; he might therefore become a priest and perform the priestly functions even if in actuality he becomes a cook or a water-carrier. At the other, lower, end of the scale are the people now called 'Untouchable'—leather-workers, sweepers, and so on, who are by birth 'unclean' or 'polluted' and with whom contact produces pollution in the members of superior castes. The inequality between persons that is an essential feature of the caste system is a religious or ritual inequality. The caste structure is one of a system of rigid partitions dividing caste from caste. At the same time the totality of all the various separate castes constitutes a single religious community the unity of which is provided by Hinduism as a system of ritual and belief. The social separation of caste from caste is something very different from the social separation of Hindus and Muslims.

● 114 182 In connexion with the study of the inter-relations of religion and social structure, therefore, the material presented by Dr. Srinivas is of very special interest and value. To define the position of an individual Coorg in the total structural system of the society in which he lives we have, in the first place, to consider him as a member of a particular joint-family (*okka*). To this there corresponds, in the field of religious behaviour, his participation in the domestic cult. This cult, with respect to its most general features, may be compared with domestic cults of the kind usually referred to as 'ancestor worship' which are found in many other peoples.

The Coorg individual is also a member of a village community, which is itself part of the Coorg local community, and so part of the wide Hindu community. Religious behaviour in this connexion

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is participation in the worship of the gods, who are both local gods and also identified with the gods of the Hindu pantheon. 114 182

But the Coorg is also a member of one of the hundreds of caste divisions of Hindu social structure. Religious behaviour in this connexion consists of the careful observance of the caste rules, so that ritual pollution is avoided. I believe that Dr. Srinivas intends to give us at some time an account of how the caste structure actually affects the social life within a village, a subject on which, hitherto, we have had no information.

In the kinds of societies with which anthropologists are chiefly concerned a direct relation between religion and social structure is to be discovered in the belief that is held that the due performance of religious rites contributes to the well-being of a group, or to the maintenance of a certain social order. This is seen in Coorg in both the domestic cult which is carried out in order to ensure the well-being of the joint-family, and also in the village cult. In what are sometimes called the higher religions there appears a different feature in the belief in some kind of personal salvation as something to be aimed at by the individual in his observance of religion. Like Christianity and Buddhism, Hinduism in its more philosophical form also holds out to the individual the hope of personal salvation, often conceived as release from the round of reincarnation. The problem of the social function of religious beliefs of this kind is highly complex. It is clear, however, that to examine the social effects of such religions we have to consider them as formulating for the members of a church an ideal of human conduct.

The rich religious life of the Coorgs is compounded of several strands. We can separate these by successively considering the individual as a member of a family group, as a member of a village community, as a worshipper of the deities of the Hindu pantheon, as a member of a particular caste and therefore having his place in the whole widespread caste structure, and finally as being at least influenced by the religious and philosophical system of Hinduism with its formulation of ideals of human conduct. For the student of comparative religion, and particularly for those interested in the sociological study of religion, this book of Dr. Srinivas offers material of exceptional value.

A. R. RADCLIFFE-BROWN

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PREFACE

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IN 1940 I was awarded, for a period of two years, a research fellowship in sociology by the University of Bombay and this enabled me to do the field-work on which this book is based. I thank the University of Bombay for making it possible for me to study the Coorgs, and I am grateful to Professor G. S. Ghurye for advice and criticism during field-work and subsequent writing.

In June 1942, a few months after returning from Coorg, I was appointed Research Assistant in Sociology in the School of Economics and Sociology in Bombay, and the duties of my new post prevented me from finishing the writing of my field material until the end of 1944. I then came to Oxford, where Professor Radcliffe-Brown's teaching greatly modified my approach to the study of human society. At his suggestion, I started applying some of his ideas regarding the inter-relation of religion and society to the material I had already gathered, and this task proved exciting and, to me, fruitful, even though I was more an ethnologist than a sociologist at the time of my field-work. I am greatly indebted to Professor Radcliffe-Brown for his teaching and for many kindnesses.

I have been greatly helped and stimulated by the teaching and friendship of Professor Evans-Pritchard, who succeeded to the Chair of Social Anthropology at Oxford after Professor Radcliffe-Brown's retirement. I have also benefited from the advice and criticism of Professors M. Fortes and M. Gluckman.

All previous writers on the Coorgs have contributed to my understanding of the social institutions and culture of the Coorgs. I gratefully acknowledge my indebtedness to them, and especially to Moegling, Richter, N. Chinnappa, and Professor M. B. Emeneau.

Coorg is a beautiful and hospitable country, and I met with kindness everywhere. I should like to thank the people of Coorg generally before mentioning certain individuals who have helped me greatly by giving me hospitality as well as information. I am under a great debt to Shri K. J. Chengappa, who has consistently and patiently supplied me with information over a period of ten years. Shri K. Kāḷappa and Shri P. M. Ponnappa have also given me information and helped me in other ways. I wish to thank

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Shri H. Tirumala Chār, B.A., B.L., and his family for their hospitality to me in Mercara.

I am very grateful to the Carnegie Research Fund for a generous grant which enabled me to pursue my studies at Oxford. I thank Dr. A. A. Baké, and the Films Division of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, for the loan of some of the photographs reproduced in this book.

My friends Mr. R. G. Lienhardt, Mr. K. O. L. Burridge, and Dr. Kathleen Gough have helped me by critically reading the typescript.

I dedicate this book to the memory of my brother, M. N. Gopal.

M. N. S.

OXFORD
April 1951

2:Emeneau L-5 (1936-1937) 1938
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Journal Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal. Letters.

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Article No. 4.

Kinship and marriage among the Coorgs.[1]

By M. B. Emeneau.

(*Communicated by Dr. B. S. Guha.*)

The Coorgs are an endogamous community of about 40,000 people who form approximately a quarter of the population of the province of Coorg, which lies in the mountains of western South India between Mysore State and British Malabar. They were originally the warrior owners of this tract and formed, and still form, the highest community in the social scale there (barring the few Brahmans who live in the province). It is doubtful how far they can be considered a caste in any strict Indian sense of the word, for they resolutely refuse to accept the ministrations of the Brahmans in any of their rites. No accurate ethnological account of these people has yet appeared. This paper gives a description of the marriage rites and the kinship system of those Coorgs who live in the central portion of the province, i.e. in Mercara and Virajpet and the district between these two towns and in Nalknad to the west; how far, if at all, the northern and southern extremities of the province present differences of detail is not known.

Kinship organization among the Coorgs takes the form essentially of father-sibs. Each sib (called oka) is marked as such by its name, which is borne by each member as his or her first name. All land is owned ideally, and a great part of it actually, by the sib as such and not by the individual; departures from this ownership system, whereby an individual by his own initiative or good fortune and without depending on the sib property acquires property which he holds as an individual, do not affect his position with regard to the sib property nor do they give the other sib-members a claim upon his individual property. In other words, individual ownership of land is an excrescence upon the traditional sib-ownership. It is the sib, moreover, that

[1] This paper represents part of the work done in 1936-37 during my tenure of a grant from the Penrose Fund of the American Philosophical Society. The phonetic writing used is in general that of the IPA. ə is the back, mid, unrounded vowel; c and j are palatal affricates, y is practically the English y. I write a subscript n at the end of a word to denote that the whole word is nasalized; e.g. in ma:vn, both the vowels and v are nasalized. The nasalization is best evaluated phonemically as a feature of the whole word and not of any separate vocalic or consonantal phoneme. When a suffix is added or the word becomes a member of a compound (e.g. in tamma: vi[n]), the nasalization does not extend beyond the limits of the simplex.

2:Emeneau L-5 (1936-1937) 1938
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I said above that the organization is essentially one of father-sibs. The qualification is necessary since a woman upon marriage renounces her sib-name and her claim to maintenance by her father-sib and acquires her husband's sib-name and a claim to maintenance by her husband's father-sib.[1] The formal statement of her acquirement of a place in her husband's sib (the ceremony is called sammanda) is the crucial point in the marriage ceremony and will be discussed more fully below. Her membership in the new sib is of such a sweeping character that she may even lose her personal name and be called after marriage by the personal name of her husband's mother or grandmother, in cases where either of these is dead and it is desired to preserve the use of the name in the family (rather than in the sib), if it is not used by some other female sib-member whose intercourse with the new family would be so intimate as to cause confusion. Even after her husband's death the wife remains a member of her husband's sib and cannot lose her rights in that sib's property except by remarriage, which is permissible and apparently of fairly common occurrence. If her second husband should be a member of her first husband's sib (and often enough it is his brother[2]), representatives of her father's sib are sent for and they and the representatives of her husband's sib perform the sammanda ceremony. By it she is given to her new husband and reacquires rights in his sib with a new orientation. My informant was of the opinion that the new rite is necessary since her rights in her husband's sib are essentially co-rights with her husband. To this extent it seems that the family is recognized by the Coorgs as a sub-unit within the sib, though it is significant that the Coorg language has no word for this sub-unit. If the widow marries a man of a different sib from that of her first husband, her rights in her

[1] This point may be discussed here from the comparative point of view, since Lowie, *Primitive Society*, p. 109, has said that he knows of no well-authenticated case of a woman in a typical sib-organized society becoming a member of her husband's sib and losing membership in her original sib. The Coorg data provide a rather clear-cut case of this kind, with the qualification indeed that a foothold is retained by the woman within her father's sib, which may however never be utilized. It is true to be sure that the Coorgs are considerably above the level of a 'primitive tribe', as were the ancient Athenians instanced by Lowie. The organization of Coorg society shows a slight secondary accent on the conjugal aspect of the family group, in that the wife has rights in her husband's sib as a co-partner with him, but that this accent is slight is clear from the lack in the language of a word denoting the family unit.

[2] It will be observed that even if a widow marries her husband's brother, the process is not automatic, but her father's sib must be called in and the woman must reacquire rights in her husband's sib. This is certainly no example of the levirate. Similarly, while a widower may marry his first wife's sister, the process is not automatic, and we must rule this out as an example of the sororate. Neither of these types of selection is either compulsory or preferred.

2: Emeneau L-5 (1936-1937) 1938
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584 The marriage is at present arranged by the families of the young people. The family of the young man approaches the family of a girl who is considered a suitable match and after much discussion arrangements are made; the girl is informed of them and in most cases she acquiesces. The authority of the family is ideally supreme. Young people have many opportunities of meeting, or at least of seeing one another, and as we should expect, matches that are not likely to be endurable are tacitly avoided by the elders of the family. Cases are known however where a girl has refused the arranged marriage and for various reasons elder members of her family have agreed with her and prevented the marriage; cases are also known where a young man after suggesting for himself a particular girl and carrying with him most of the other members of his family has found opposition from an elderly female member who disapproves of the girl and he has had to give up his idea. Life in a joint family, as is well known in other parts of India, is a matter [596] of the adjustment of conflicting stresses. The evidence of the [593] marriage song seems to show that at some time in the past a young man went out himself to look for a suitable girl and settled 584 the matter himself, without reference to his family until the time 174 for the formal arrangement arrived. There is probably some 533 historical truth in the account, but the period at which this was the custom is not known. Richter's account of 1870 im- [114] plies, though it does not mention explicitly, a state of things like that at the present day.

584 When a marriage is to be formally arranged and fixed, the aruvē[1] of the young man's family accompanied by representatives of this family, e.g. the man's father, his elder brother, or a brother-in-law, go to the house of the girl's family. There they meet the aruvē and the representatives of the girl's family. Formally the man's party declare that he will marry the girl and the girl's party that they will give the girl, and the aruvēs guarantee that [342] their respective parties will hold to the agreement. The cere- [778] mony is performed in the nellaki of the house, i.e. the portion of the central hall opposite the door, where a lamp hangs. It is regarded as the sacred part of the house and apparently the sanctity centers in the lamp, before which prayers are offered [585] in the evening to the ancestors of the sib (or nowadays to any other gods in addition). Most of the ceremonies to be described

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[1] Two sibs stand in mutual relationship to one another, so that each provides an aruvē for the other on certain ceremonial occasions. Their duties in connexion with marriages are described in the text. At a funeral the aruvē is present and seems to have been originally entrusted with supervision of the ceremonial. At present the office tends to become a mere formality and the aruvē does not necessarily come from the traditional sib. The man of the traditional sib is called mannaruvē 'land-aruvē'; one who is engaged for the occasion only is ponnaruvē 'gold-aruvē' and this term seems to carry with it some derogatory connotation.

2:Emeneau L-5 (1936-1937) 1938
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'Here! take the witness-money so that you will not break your promise, (being immovable) as the fence over which the jungle does not encroach and the boundary-stone beyond which the walls of the paddy-nursery are not shifted.' With these words he gives three annas to the aruvē.

After the bride has thus been made a member of her husband's sib, he goes to the kitchen and without entering it takes her hand and brings her out. After this, her mother removes the cloth which he has up to this time worn on his head and puts it on his shoulders; he may leave it there or remove it entirely after this. He and his party with the bride and some members of her party then start for his house. As he is bringing her out of the house, the incident with her male cross-cousin takes place as has been described above. When they have arrived at the house of his sib, formal salutations take place, noteworthy among them those of the bride to her parents-in-law, and some member of the bride's party cuts six plantain stems. The bride is led into her husband's room and remains there except for the water-carrying ceremony. Everyone receives betel and light refreshments. Then the bride removes her veil and is led out to the well with music and accompanied by all the people. She breaks a coconut and pours the juice into the well, and then carries on her head a pot of water from the well to the house. Formerly according to tradition and the wedding song, she also carried a load of dung to the paddy-field. These are her first household duties in her new sib. She is led back to her husband's room and replaces her veil. Then all have the midday meal and the bride's party are led with ceremony as far as the pasture near the house and are dismissed. After this, songs are sung by Coorg singers and in them the bride is given her new personal name. This may be one quite different from her old one, if as has been said above, it is desired to perpetuate some name in the house or if the bride's name is the same as that of some woman already in the family and confusion might result. Or, her name as an unmarried girl may be kept with the change only of -ammē or -akē, the terminations of the names of unmarried girls, to -avvē, the termination of the names of married women, as happened in the case of the woman whose name is given in the text above; Taṉgammē became Taṉgavvē.

The bridegroom is brought to the nellaki by his best man, throws rice to the lamp and salutes all the members of his sib who are present. He is then led to his room, where the bride has been all the time except when led out to carry water. He now removes her veil, and the marriage is consummated on this night. On the following morning the villagers return, are fed at midday and formally dismissed. After some days, a variable number but usually the next day, the bride returns without her husband to her father's house. No ceremonies take place. Richter's statement that the bride is treated as a polluted woman

2: Emeneau L-5 (1936-1937) 1938
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and is unable to touch cooking utensils and causes her family inability to take part in ceremonies as does a woman after childbirth is definitely untrue and is vigorously contradicted by my informants. After a short period her husband is invited by her family and with a companion he comes and takes her to his house and thereafter she lives there.

Of the two ceremonies, mu:rta and sammanda, the latter ceremony is performed at every marriage. The former can be performed for a woman only once in her life, however many times she marries, and so is not done when she remarries. For a man, on the other hand, it is performed each time he marries. Consequently, if a widower marries a widow, the mu:rta is performed for him alone and on the following day the sammanda is performed, giving the woman rights in his sib.

In giving this account of the institutions and ceremonies of Coorg marriages I have in many places tacitly corrected previous accounts, especially that given by Richter. On examining his description it was found that very many of the details as given by him were vigorously contradicted by my informants. It has not seemed necessary to draw attention in most cases to the discrepancy between my account and his. My account has been carefully checked with a number of Coorgs of some age and experience and from a number of localities within the large district whose institutions I have described. It will be found, I think, that wherever my account and Richter's disagree, mine may be accepted as correct.

The main part of the information presented was furnished by Mrry. K. Calappa Avl., retired sub-magistrate and additional sub-judge, Mercara, Coorg, to whom I must record my gratitude for this and for the linguistic information which he gave me freely over a period of eight months in 1936-37. His information was supplemented for this paper by many conversations with other Coorgs and by attending and making notes at several weddings to which I was hospitably invited.

Appendix I.

Readmission of a woman to her father's sib.

If a widow wishes to marry a man of a different sib from that of her first husband, or if, as happens rarely, she wishes because of ill-treatment to return to her father's house, a ceremony of readmission to her father's sib and renunciation of all claims to a part in her first husband's sib is necessary. After all arrangements have been made, a formal ceremony (called kallupara kaypé 'the ceremony of the pebbles') takes place at the nellaki of her first husband's house. Representatives of the two sibs and the aruvés of the two sibs gather. The movable property of the woman, her clothes, etc., are brought to the nellaki. The parties separate into two lines as in the sammanda, *and the aruvé of* the woman's sib says: daṇḍu kaḍe na:ṇo:mi:llavé nu:bendu: aggaruvanu: nā:lu kāṇi nindiru:.

2:Emeneau L-5 (1936-1937) 1938
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children), and (b) the children of one's siblings or parallel cousins of the opposite sex from oneself and of one's cross-cousins of the same sex as oneself. Members of (a) are possible mates of members of (b). For (a) a collective term is found disregarding sex, i.e. 'children'.

7. The terms that would apply to Ego's mate's relatives if the mate were a cross-cousin apply also to those relatives when the mate is not a cross-cousin.

8. A step-mother is called by the same term as a sister of the mother, a step-father by the same term as a brother of the father. (This is not evidence for levirate and sororate, but would follow from a strict cross-cousin marriage system; see ref. [9], p. 128.)

9. Two classes in the first descending generation yield one class only in the second descending generation; there are two terms, one for each sex, for grandchildren. For these a collective term is found disregarding sex, as for 'children' in 6 above. Similarly, the second ascending generation is divided only on the basis of sex.

10. The third ascending generation, like the second, has two terms differentiated on the basis of sex. For the third descending generation there are no unitary terms, only phrases, see Z in Table 2.

11. All the above statements are valid whether Ego is male or female.

12. For husband and wife there are separate terms, *odeyā* and *ponnu* respectively.

Bibliography.

A bibliography of the meagre writings on the Coorgs will include the following as the most important items in English (there are no books on the subject in any other European language):

Rev. G. Richter, *Manual of Coorg* (Mangalore, Basel Mission Book Depository, 1870). This is the earliest account and must be taken into consideration despite its limitations; it is still available at the publishers.

Lewis Rice, *Mysore and Coorg* (Bangalore, Mysore Government Press, 1878); volume 3 on Coorg. This is an almost verbatim reprint of Richter's book, with few additions or changes of any importance.

Pandanda Muthanna, *Coorg and the Coorgs* (Siddhapur, Coorg, C. M. Ponnappa, 1931). A small book with some good material, but on the whole meagre and disappointing.

Dewan Bahadur L. K. Ananthakrishna Iyer, Presidential Address to the Anthropological Section of the Indian Science Congress, Hyderabad (Deccan), 1937. The Dewan Bahadur promised a book on Coorg similar to his *Cochin Tribes and Castes and Mysore Tribes and Castes*; since his lamented death in February 1937, it has been announced (Man, Vol. 37, No. 120) that his manuscript was at the time of his death almost completed. Pending the desired publication of this manuscript, it has seemed desirable to publish this account of one side of Coorg life, especially since in the printed presidential address there is one very serious misstatement. It is said there that among the Coorgs cross-cousin marriage is prohibited; this is definitely not the case, the evidence given in this paper will show that cross-cousin marriage must be considered to be the favored form among the Coorgs, either operating as such at some past period, or at least held as an ideal.

I must express my gratitude to Dr. David Mandelbaum for his criticisms and suggestions on numerous points in the paper.

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

PREFACE.

THIS Manual aims at a truthful sketch of the past history and the present physical and political position of the interesting Province of Coorg which has for the last 36 years been under the sway of the British Government.

Great changes have taken place during this period. Coorg, though for a long time a jealously guarded *imperium in imperio*, had gradually to yield to the onward march of civilisation, in spite of the antagonism of its conservative Headmen. Good roads in every direction opened up this once impenetrable mountain-girt tract, and numbers of enterprising British settlers with capital and national energy have already stamped a new character upon the country. By three opposite lines the electric wire has linked Coorg with the grand net of the South-Indian telegraph and consequently with Europe and far distant America. Education is firmly and extensively established, and the administration of the country compares most favourably with that of any well-governed province in India.

By the kind permission of the Superintendent and the Chief-Commissioner of Coorg, I had access for the compilation of this Gazetteer to all the official records bearing on the subject. Amongst these I have found the "Rájéndranáme" and the "Memoir of the Coorg Survey" of great service. The former contains the history of the Coorg Rájahs from 1633 to 1808, composed under the eye of Dodda-Vírájender, the hero of Coorg history. The latter was written by Lieut. Connor of the Royal Engineers in 1817. Though drawn up under the most untoward circumstances, it exhibits a clear and comprehensive insight into the state of Coorg half a century since and reflects great credit upon the intelligence and ability of that Officer.

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4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

In 1855 Dr. H. Moegling, the first Protestant Missionary in Coorg, wrote a little book, entitled "Coorg Memoirs" which in 1866 was republished in German in an enlarged and amended edition. This book intended for a Missionary public furnishes extensive and correct information on social and religious topics and has been largely made use of in this volume.

I am also indebted to my late Assistant, Mr. A. Graeter, for his communications on the Coorg language which he has successfully studied.

But whatever source of information has been made use of—and I am under obligation to several Gentlemen for special communications and references, to whom I herewith offer my thanks—the materials have been worked with the view of forming a homogenous whole.

The Compiler's residence of 14 years amongst the Coorgs and his familiar intercourse with them in every part of the country as Inspector of the Government Vernacular Schools, may be accepted as a further guarantee for the reliable character of the information in this Gazetteer.

The greater portion of the Manual having been read in manuscript by Mr. Bowring, the late Chief-Commissioner, it may be considered as having passed official censorship.

In the spelling of native words, which are based upon their etymological roots, as far as these could be ascertained, an attempt has been made at a uniform system according to the one usually received by English Orientalists, except where established English usage has otherwise fixed the orthography. The short vowels are unaccented, the long have an acute accent above them and are pronounced with their natural sound as in German or Italian.

The distance of the Press rendering it impracticable for the author to correct the proofsheets, sundry misprints have been left which, however, are noted in the Errata.

G. Richter.

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interspersed with such trees, as are peculiar to these localities. The flora of Coorg is almost identical with that of Southern India. It is of course beyond the scope of this Gazetteer and equally beyond the knowledge of the compiler, to attempt anything like a full description of the Coorg flora; we can only glance at its distinguishing features and enumerate a few species, that are of practical value, reserving those which fall under the care of the agri-horticulturist for a special consideration.

The first collection of Coorg plants appears to have been made by Captains Munroe and Gough, who probably placed their collections at the disposal of the famous botanist Dr. Wight. Mr. Metz, a German missionary on the Nilagiris, also collected a good many plants about Mercara, which were afterwards distributed in Germany by Hohenacker and named by Miquel. In Major Heber Drury's book on "Useful Plants" and Dr. Bidie's "Timber Trees of India" (1862) much information is given about the principal timber trees in Coorg.

Looking upon Coorg with the eye of the forester, rather than that of the general botanist, the most superficial survey will not fail to discover invaluable treasures of timber trees and their produce, scattered all over the province. Small as the country is, there are nevertheless distinct tracts with trees peculiar to them. The two prominent zones are by the Coorgs called Male-kádu or Hill-forests and Kanive-kádu or Hillock-jungles (Kanive, a ridge between paddy-fields, hillock). Botanically they may perhaps be determined as evergreen and deciduous forests, the former clothing the Ghats, the latter the eastern hill-tracts.

All along the slopes of the Ghats the Poon spar—"Calophyllum augustifolium"—rules as king of the forest. When full grown, it is often upwards of 100 feet in height, its wood is clean, tough and elastic and there is perhaps no other tree so well suited in every respect for making ship's spars and masts.

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carry the bride with them. On her return to her former home, she is treated as unclean, her dress and ornaments are taken from her; she is not permitted to touch anything in the house, and is shut up like a woman after childbirth. In this seclusion the young woman is kept for a fortnight, or a month, or even two months, according to the wealth and respectability of the family. From that time she becomes free. She goes back to her new home, and may now return on a visit to her mother's house, whenever she likes, without fear of molestation. In Kiggattnád the Coorgs have conformed in some measure to Badaga (Canarese) customs. There the new couple first meet in the bride's house and are both of them welcomed by the relatives and other guests. Then the same ceremony is gone through in the bridegroom's house, whither the party repair in company. But the true Coorg-rites are strictly observed in Coorg proper, or the Méndalenád, i. e. the northern part, the highland-country. For Kiggattnád is in many more respects, than geographical position only, below Méndalenád.

It has been asserted, both by Lieutenant Connor and Dr. Moegling, that the married life of the Coorgs is disfigured by the extraordinary and pernicious system of Polyandry or rather communism of women in one house. Also Col. Wilks in his History of Mysore (Second Edition, Madras 1869.) asserts as "perfectly true" (Vol. II p. 102.) a similar statement, contained in Tippu's address to the Coorgs, which is given further on in the historical part. Upon a careful examination of the matter, I may state as a fact, that, whatever may have been the custom in bygone ages, there is no such thing now practised amongst the Coorgs as a "national rite." That a people without the restraint of a morality, based upon pure and holy religious principles and enlivened by divine grace, should live together, exposed to great temptations, without occasionally falling into grievous sin, is too much to expect

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Mysore and Coorg passed between Uddur in Coorg and Kattemálalavádi in Mysore.

b. Dodda-Vírappa.

In the reign of Dodda-Vírappa of Mercara, Nanjunda, his kinsman, was Rájah of Periapatna. Some of his officials opened a treasonable correspondence with Chikkadéva Vodeya of Mysore whom they invited to come and rule over them. Nanjarája, perceiving the threatened danger, went to Mercara to implore the assistance of his relative, who espousing his cause, marched immediately to support him, but on reaching Siddapur he had the mortification to learn, that Periapatna had fallen and that Vírarája, the son of Nanjunda, who had been entrusted with the command of the capital, seeing his situation desperate, had gallantly fallen in its defence, having previously in compliance with the sanguinary dictates of honor, put to death his wives and children to preserve them from polution.

[114] (In Col. Wilk's "History of Mysore" this event is placed in the reign of Canty Rova Narsa Rájah in 1644 and Lieut. Connor in his "Memoir of the Codagu Survey" mentions "Immadi" as the Rájah of Mysore who attacked Periapatna, but he was only 20 years old, when in 1637 he succeeded Cham Ráj and as he was poisoned in 1639, it is not likely, that he attempted the conquest about 50 years later!)

Encouraged by his success the Mysore Rájah, Chikkadéva Vodeya, prepared for the conquest of Coorg. His army advanced but a short way beyond Bálele in Coorg and encamped on the plain of Palupáre, when they were met by the Coorgs. Before daybreak Dodda-Vírappa attacked them and slew 15,000 men with 77 officers, the rest fled back into Mysore. Immediately after this event the Coorg Rájah marched to Tómara, to oppose an invasion of the Rájah of Kotangadi, who with an army of 5,000 Nairs had ascended

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of savage cruelty. He was permitted to do what he liked with his own people. The Company's Government took their responsibilities as the paramount power of India easy, and forgot, that they had pledged themselves to the fulfilment of Vírarájendra's last will.

The 10th chapter of the Reminiscences treats on Coorg; we read there:—"In the days of Hyder's successful usurpation of the Musnud of Mysore, the reigning Rájah of Coorg was defeated and taken prisoner by this Mussulman Prince and carried to Mysore, where he was kindly treated from policy, and persuaded the usurper, that if he would send him back to his own country, he would prevail on all his subjects to submit to the Mussulman yoke; they having previously betaken themselves to their hills and fastnesses, from whence he could neither drive nor recall them. He proved himself an able statesman, if such a term be applicable to a mountain chief, since he improved the natural fortifications of his kingdom, built towns, formed an armed militia, and successfully defied his former conqueror. He was succeeded by the boy, whom his blindness had spared, and left him immense wealth, as well as most absolute power over all his subjects and every kind of property in his little kingdom, indeed, I blush to write it, the absolute deity of his ignorant and misguided people. Such, in March 1811, was Lingarájendra Vodeyaru, to whom I carried an introduction from the Honorable Arthur Cole, Resident in Mysore, who was also nominal Resident in Coorg."

In the above extract General Welsh, though no doubt unintentionally, makes several mis-statements. Amongst the English Officers and Officials, then stationed in Mysore, such may have been the current talk about the Rájah of Coorg. But, as already shown in a former part of the history, it is a fact, that Lingarája, the father of Vírarája was allured to Mysore by Hyder Ali and there detained, ostensibly as a

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guest, but in reality as a prisoner, until by stratagem he returned to Coorg. Vírarája, however, lived for several years as a prisoner in the Fort of Periapatna, until he escaped over the frontier into his mountain home and asserted his independence. General Welsh confounds father and son. Again Lingarája was no longer a "boy" when his brother Vírarája died, but a man of 34 years of age. Finally the Coorgs as little worshipped their Rájahs as Gods, as did the Romans their Cæsars, when they burnt incense before their images!

"On the 19th of the same month, having heard much in praise of the sport in Coorg, and being at leisure for such a trip, I set out from Bangalore, in company with Lieut. W. Williamson, a young man of my own corps, both a keen and hardy sportsman as well as a very agreeable companion. We travelled post, in palanquin, to Vírarájendrapet, a distance of one hundred and fifty miles. On the 22nd of March after a hearty breakfast, provided for us by the Rájah's people, *gratis*, we mounted two large elephants, at daybreak, and proceeded over hills and through vales, up and down, zigzag, now at the bottom of deep ravines, then at the top of precipices, till, at last, after eight hours' fagging, we reached the palace built for the accommodation of Europeans outside the stonefort of Mercara, the capital.

"This place is delightfully situated on an eminence, near the summit of a range of lofty and difficult mountains. The pass up these mountains being fortified and defended, however, would make it a very strong place, for it completely commands every approach on the other side. The distance we estimated at twenty-four miles. The Rájah's own palace is inside the fort; but his horse and elephant stables are outside on the slope of the glacis. The town is remarkably clean and well built, about half a mile off by an excellent high road, and at the farther extremity there is a rising ground, with a strong mud barrier, after entering which, you come upon

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of his court; the few troops that garrison his town are also his guards."

Dr. Moegling pithily characterises Lingarája thus: "He was the incarnation of the worst elements of the Coorg spirit. Greediness after gold, no matter how obtained, a bottomless depth of cunning, the most brazen hypocrisy, cowardice as abject as cruel and a strong dose of sensuality were united in his character."

In a Shásana-stone deposited in the Mercara Onkáreshvara dévastána, which was built by him, he is however, by his native admirer praised as:—"The illustrious Lingarája Wadeer, son of Lingarája and grandson of Appájiráju, of the Lunar race, pure as the milky sea, worshipped with the fragrance of the Párijáta flower, of the family of Bháradwája, follower of the Ashwaláyana Sútra of Rig Véda, a zealous and learned worshipper of Shiva, sitting on the illustrious throne of Coorg in the centre of the milky city, adorned with precious jewels, of unequalled beauty and bravery, smiling like the sun in unparalleled glory, famous to the end of the world, generous and brave.—"

C. VÍRARÁJA.

1820—1834.

1. Vírarája's tyranny.

With the death of Lingarája affairs in Coorg did not improve. The unfortunate people had only changed masters. As soon as the young Vírarája, who was about 20 years old, had taken possession of his father's throne and treasure, he destroyed the people, who had displeased or thwarted him during the life of his father. Many members of the family of the Coorg Rájahs seem to have fallen at that time. One, Channa Víra, escaped with his family across the Mysore frontier. But to no purpose; his relative knew how to turn